THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA KRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (d) The advisory Committee set up under the Chairmanship of Shri Raunaq Singh, Industrialist, to examine the desirability and feasibility of establishing a Free Port in India had submitted its report on the subject. The report has been examined and the Govt. has asked the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade to draw up an implementation model including likely changes in laws and rules, administrative framework and also various fiscal measures to enable the Govt. to take a policy decision.

Scientists with Coffee Board

2780. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number and details of scientists with Coffee Board;

(b) the nature of research work carried out by these scientists during the past three years and results achieved;

(c) whether the scientists in Coffee Board are not at all conducting research in coffee causing losses to Coffee Board; and

(d) if so, the facts and details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA KRISHNA HEGDE): (a) the total number of scientists presently working in the Coffee Board is 84. The Research Department of the Board, which is headed by the Director of Research, consists of 1 Joint Director, 6 Divisional Heads, 4 Deputy Directors, 17 Subject specialists, 18 Assistant Specialists, 10 Research Assistants Gr. I and 27 Research Assistants Gr. II

(b) to (d) With a view to increase production and productivity of coffee and to achieve the target of 3 lakh tonnes of production of coffee by the end of Ninth Five Year Plan, the Research Department of Coffee Board has been carrying out the following major projects, viz. (i) Plant Improvement Programme; (ii) Crop Management Programme; (iii) Project for Crop Protection; (iv) Post Harvest Technology; and (v) maintenance of Research Farms.

The research efforts of the scientists of the Coffee Board, have also ensured that the production of coffee has increased from 18,000 tonnes in 1950 to 2.28 lakh tonnes in 1997-98. Similarly, productivity has risen from 500 kg./ha to 860 kg./ha.

Some of the achievements of the Research Department of the Board in the last three years have been as under:—

—Improvement of Congensis × Robusta inter-specific hybrid by sib-mating for compact bush and bold seed.

—Identification of new sources of resistance to coffee leaf rust and nine new races of leaf frust fungus, Hemilea Vastatrix.

—Evolving 17 new crosses of Arabica with high yield and disease resistance and establishing them in multilocational trials.

—Standardisation of (i) protocols for regeneration of plants through tissue culture methods: (ii) spacing and topping requirement of dwarf Arabica selection, viz. San Ramon and Cavery; (iii) economic and efficient chemical weed control measure; (iv) sustenance irrigation requirement of Arabica and Robusta through drip irrigation; (v) Efficient spray schedules against leaf frust disease involving systematic fungicides Bayleton and Plantvax and developing a disease forecasting model, etc.

—Identification of (i) drought tolerant genotypes and evolving methods for overcoming drought; (ii) different isolates and four collateral hosts of black rot fungus Koleroga noxia and Standardisation of efficient and cost effective control methods.

—Evolving IPM package for the control of Coffee Berry Borer

Hypotheneous hampei invloving cultural, chemical, biological and quarantine measures and successful management of this pest below economic threshold level in infested areas.

Trade Barriers by Developed Countries.

2781. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have expressed concern over the increasing propensity towards erecting new trade barriers by the developed countries;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to formulate new strategy to face the increasing trade barriers by the developed countries; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA KRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Our strategy for encouraging other countries to remove trade barriers consist of the following elements:

(i) The procedure of dispute settlement through the World Trade Organisation;

(ii) Bilateral contacts, especially through the mechanism of Joint Commissions;

(iii) Diplomatic activity through our Missions abroad;

(iv) Raising the issues in the appropriate WTO Committees.

Classification of Rice into Two Categories

2782. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to reclassify the non-basmati rice into two categories in place of the existing single category;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the advantages of the new classification?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA KRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sir. As per the existing norms of classification of rice for Central Pool procurement, non scented (non-basmati) varieties of rice are already classified in two groups viz; Grade 'A' and common.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Rubber and Tea Cultivation in Assam

2783. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated target of production, total area coverage of rubber and tea cultivation in the State of Assam during the Ninth Plan;

(b) the total annual production of tea and rubber in Assam during last five years and its percent contribution to the national exports; and

(c) the details of the package of incentives being provided by the Tea Board to large, medium and small tea growers alongwith criteria for such incentives?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA KRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The estimated target of production of Tea in the State of Assam by the terminal year of Ninth Plan period is 500 Million kgs. The production of rubber for Assam at the end of IX Five Year Plan is estimated at 5,000 tonnes. The estimated target of total area coverage of tea cultivation and planting of rubber in Assam during the Ninth Plan period is 20,000 ha. and 3500 ha. respectively.

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